

Did you know...?

- While Native American History is well documented, there are hundreds of interesting facts and trivia about our first Americans that many people are not aware of. This article examines a few of these.
- According to the 2010 Census, 5.2 million people in the United States are identified as American Indian and Alaska Native, either alone or in combination with one or more other races, comprising 1.7% percent of the total population.
- In the 2010 Census, 41% of the American Indian and Alaska Natives lived in the Western United States.
- In the 2010 Census, of the American Indian and Alaska Natives, the largest tribe was the Cherokee, with a population of 819,000; followed by the Navajo, Choctaw, Mexican American Indian, Chippewa, Sioux, Apache, and Blackfoot.
- Even though the vast majority of Native American live in the West today, the city with the largest American Indian population is New York City. This is followed by Los Angeles, California; Phoenix, Arizona, Anchorage, Alaska, and Albuquerque, New Mexico.
- There were an estimated 18-20 million Native Americans living in the United States when Europeans first arrived.
- Many historians believe that the United States Constitution was partially modeled after the Great Law of Peace, the constitution of the Iroquois Confederacy. In 1988, the United States Congress passed a resolution to recognize the influence of the Iroquois League upon the Constitution and Bill of Rights.
- The oldest evidence of cotton cloth has been unearthed by archaeologists from caves in Mexico which date back as far as 8,000 years ago. Remains of cotton cloth and cotton bolls were found, making Native Americans the makers of the oldest cotton found to date.
- During the days of the Old West, the Cheyenne, Apache, Navajo, Comanche Sioux and Blackfoot were some of the major Indian nations. All lived in the area known as the Great Plains of North America, a vast area that stretches from the Mississippi River to the west of the continent.
- The Cherokee, like many other tribes, traced their family relations matrilineal (through the mother.) As a result, there were many women who held leadership roles. Women of great influence became known as "Ghigau," meaning Beloved Woman, the highest role to which a Cherokee woman could aspire. The name also translates into War Woman and was often awarded to courageous women warriors.
- Viking explorers met Native Americans long before Christopher Columbus did. First making their way to North America in the 11th century, archaeological evidence suggests they encountered Native American some 500 years before Columbus arrived.
- Countless Indian words have become a part of the English language. Just a few of these include: barbecue, cannibal, caribou, chipmunk, chocolate, cougar, hammock, hurricane, mahogany, moose, opossum, potato, skunk, squash, toboggan and woodchuck.
- The 1894 Census Bureau estimated more than 40 "official" Indian Wars in the United States that cost the lives of some 19,000 white men, women and children and the lives of about 30,000 Indians. In addition to the official Indian Wars, there were hundreds of skirmishes between the settlers and the Native Americans that resulted when pioneers pushed westward, encroaching upon traditional Indian lands.

- The Tiguex War was fought in the winter of 1540-41 by the army of Francisco Vasquez de Coronado against the 12 pueblos of Tiwa Indians along both sides of the Rio Grande River in New Mexico. It was the first Indian War between Europeans and Native Americans in the American West.
- The Navajo Nation has the largest American Indian population of all of the Native American reservations.
- The first kidnapping in America took place when Italian explorers kidnapped an Indian child to bring to France in July, 1524.
- Centuries ago, Native Americans developed a process in which dried cactus-eating insects could be turned into red dye called cochineal. This Indian dye became one of the most important exports from the New World in the late 16th century. This red dye was highly valued by the European cloth industry for hundreds of years and was used to dye the red British uniforms in the American Revolution.
- During the fall of the Romans, the Hohokam Indians were constructing the largest irrigation canal in North America. One of the most sophisticated irrigation networks ever created using pre-industrial technology, the Hohokam created 700 miles of canals by hand between 600-1450 AD in Arizona.
- According to the Federal Census of 2010, there are 565 federally-recognized Indian tribes. Additionally, there are at least 100 state recognized tribes.
- The Fetterman Massacre, called the "Battle of the Hundred Slain" by the Indians, occurred in Wyoming in 1866. It was the Army's worst defeat on the Great Plains until the disaster on the Little Big Horn nearly ten years later.
- Native American religions vary widely. For some, the Sun was the supreme god, others worshiped the goddess of death; others believed in an immaterial and almighty god, called Manitu.
- Native Americans cultivated and developed many plants that are very important in the world today, including white and sweet potatoes, corn, beans, tobacco, chocolate, peanuts, cotton, rubber and gum. They were also the first to make popcorn.
- A far greater percentage of Native Americans, per capita, serve in the United States Military today than any other race or ethnic group.
- Canoeing, snowshoeing, tobogganing, lacrosse, relay races, tug-of-wars, and ball games are just a few of the games early Native Americans played and still enjoy today. The word Toboggan comes from the Algonquian word odabaggan, which was invented by Indians in the eastern part of the United States to carry game over the snow.
- Native Americans did not know the wheel and they did not have vehicles. To transport their goods while following the bison herds, they used the travois: two sticks joined to one end and diverging to the other. Before the arrival of the horses, smaller travois were used, dragged by dogs. Once horses were acquired, larger travois were attached with harnesses.
- The first federal treaty enacted with Native Americans was with the Delaware Indians in 1787.
- Native Americans often served as guides in the exploration of America. Many of their trails became emigrant roads, which were later followed by the railroads.
- From the animals introduced by Europeans, the horse was the most significant. During the 17th century, Spaniards introduced horses, which escaped in the now southwestern US. Native

Americans quickly adapted to utilizing the horse, riding bareback, making it far easier in buffalo hunting as well as defending themselves or making attacks.

- Iroquois tribes, including the Mohawk, Oneida, Onondaga, Cayuga and Seneca, fought on the British side, during the American Revolution (1775-1783). They received nothing from England for their participation and the United States took their territory. In revenge, Americans destroyed 40 Iroquois camps and the survivors had to take refuge in Canada.
- Between 1820 and 1845, tens of thousands of Choctaw Cherokee, Chickasaw, Creek and Seminole were forced from their lands under the Indian Removal Act and forced to walk to the westward to Indian Territory (Oklahoma). During their travels, some 25% died due to tough winters, hunger, disease and exhaustion. By 1930, the territory east of the Mississippi River was virtually cleared of Indians.